CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

generating an explanation of a vehicle condition based on a vehicle diagnostics code comprising a set of symbols.

2. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the generating operation comprises retrieving a textual explanation of the vehicle diagnostics code.

3. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the generating operation comprises retrieving a graphical illustration of a component associated with the vehicle diagnostics code.

4. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising generating supplemental information related to the vehicle diagnostics code.

5. A method as recited in claim 4 wherein the generating supplemental information operation comprises retrieving an estimated price for repairing a condition related to the vehicle diagnostics code.

6. A method as recited in claim 4 wherein the generating supplemental information operation comprises retrieving a location of a vehicle dealership.

7. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising presenting the explanation at a client computer.

8. A method as recited in claim 7 wherein the presenting operation comprises presenting the explanation at a local, vehicle-based client.

9. A method as recited in claim 7 wherein the presenting operation comprises presenting the explanation at a remote client.

10. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising storing an updated explanation of the vehicle condition in a memory.

11. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising transmitting the vehicle diagnostics code to a remote computer.

12. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program having executable instructions for performing a process comprising generating a deciphered explanation of a vehicle diagnostics code.

13. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12 wherein the generating operation comprises generating a textual explanation of the vehicle diagnostics code.

14. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12 wherein the generating operation comprises generating a graphical illustration of a component associated with the vehicle diagnostics code.

15. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12, the process further comprising generating supplemental information related to the vehicle diagnostics code.

16. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 15 wherein the generating supplemental information operation comprises generating an estimated price for repairing a condition related to the vehicle diagnostics code.

17. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 15 wherein the generating supplemental information operation comprises generating a location of a vehicle dealership.

18. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12, the process further comprising presenting the deciphered explanation at a client computer.

19. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 18 wherein the presenting operation comprises presenting the deciphered explanation at a local, vehicle-based client

20. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 18 wherein the presenting operation comprises presenting the deciphered explanation at a remote client.

21. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12, the process further comprising updating the deciphered explanation of the vehicle diagnostics code.

22. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 12, the process further comprising:

transmitting the vehicle diagnostics code to a remote computer;

looking up the deciphered explanation in an explanations store in operable communication with the remote computer, the explanations store having one or more explanations associated with one or more associated diagnostics codes.

23.   A vehicle comprising a computer generating a deciphered explanation of a vehicle diagnostics code.

24.   A vehicle as recited in claim 23, wherein the deciphered explanation comprises a textual explanation of the vehicle diagnostics code.

25.   A vehicle as recited in claim 23, wherein the deciphered explanation comprises a graphical illustration of a component associated with the vehicle diagnostics code.

26.   A vehicle as recited in claim 23, wherein the computer is further operable to generate supplemental information related to the vehicle diagnostics code.

27.   A vehicle as recited in claim 26, wherein the supplemental information comprises an estimated price for repairing a condition related to the vehicle diagnostics code.

28.   A vehicle as recited in claim 26 wherein the supplemental information comprises a location of a vehicle dealership.

29.   A vehicle as recited in claim 23 further comprising a display device presenting the deciphered explanation.

30.   A vehicle as recited in claim 23, further comprising an audio output device presenting an audio version of the deciphered explanation.

31.   A vehicle as recited in claim 29, wherein the computer transmits the deciphered explanation to a remote client computer for presentation at the remote client.

32.   A vehicle as recited in claim 23, wherein the computer comprises an updateable repository of one or more deciphered explanations associated with one or more vehicle diagnostics codes.

33.   A vehicle-based system comprising:

a diagnostics receiver module receiving a vehicle diagnostics code from a vehicle diagnostics system, the vehicle diagnostics code including a set of one or more symbols and corresponding to a vehicle condition;

means for generating an explanation of the vehicle condition based on the vehicle diagnostics code.

34.   A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 33 wherein the means for generating comprises a computer-readable memory storing a diagnostics information registry having a field storing a reference to the explanation.

35.   A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 33 wherein the means for generating comprises a memory storing explanations of one or more predetermined vehicle diagnostics codes.

36.   A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 35 wherein the memory stores one or more of a graphical explanation, a textual explanation, and an audio explanation.

37.   A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 33 further comprising a network communications module communicating the explanation over a network.

38.   A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 33 further comprising a media output device presenting the explanation.

39. A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 38 wherein the media output device comprises audio speakers outputting an audio explanation.

40. A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 34 further comprising an update module updating information in the diagnostics information registry.

41. A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 34 wherein the diagnostics information registry comprises:

a severity field storing a severity level associated with the vehicle condition;

a component field storing a component identifier associated with the vehicle condition;

a type field storing a diagnostics code type associated with the vehicle diagnostics code;

an automatic field storing an indicator indicating whether to automatically present the explanation;

an graphics field storing an indicator indicating whether to present graphics data included in the explanation.

42. A vehicle-based system as recited in claim 33 wherein the vehicle diagnostics code is an onboard diagnostics II (OBDII) code.

43. A method comprising:

receiving a vehicle diagnostics code from a vehicle diagnostics system, the vehicle diagnostics code including a set of one or more symbols and corresponding to a vehicle condition;

retrieving an explanation of the vehicle condition based on the vehicle diagnostics code.

44. A method as recited in claim 43 wherein the retrieving operation comprises accessing a memory location storing an updateable explanation.

45. A method as recited in claim 44 further comprising updating the explanation.

46. A method as recited in claim 43 further comprising presenting the explanation automatically in response to receiving the vehicle diagnostics code.

47. A method as recited in claim 43 further comprising presenting the explanation in response to a request from a user.

48. A method as recited in claim 43 further comprising communicating the explanation over a network.